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## Rich Man, Poor Man, Transsexual Woman

Summer 1955 and this child's fate has already been determined by nature.

A child giggles whilst drinking the bath water from an egg cup. It is 1955 and not long since the national press have reported the story of a Spitfire pilot and racing driver who has "become" a woman through what we now call Gender Reassignment Treatment.

The child's parents have registered and christened her as a boy. How is anyone to know any different? Within three years "he" will know otherwise though ... and the little girl inside will have learned enough about life already not to mention her profound self knowledge to anyone.

In years to come she will learn that people who seek the treatment to release them from this silent hell are labelled as freaks and get hounded by the press. They are shunned by their families and friends. They are treated with less respect than murderers and rapists. Anything they receive from medical specialists or authority is to be regarded as a grudging and contemptuous concession which they don't really deserve. Not surprisingly, she will seek to bury her terrifying self knowledge deep within herself.

As enlightenment gradually dawns on society, sometime in her thirties, she will wince though when she sees women like her described as having been "born a man".

A man? Look again at the photograph. You could no more call the child a "man", than you could label them a "Computer Consultant", "Conservative" or "Rights Campaigner". Yet all of these labels are a part of her development potential, just as her innate femininity means she will not rest until she finds her true self-expression within society.

So, eventually, she will come to the agonising choice which confronts all [transsexual](#) people in the end ... made worse for having deferred it until mid life. She will have to decide how to deal with the partner and family she acquired whilst trying to be what everyone expected of her. She will have to put her career on the line. She will lose her home and tens of thousands of pounds through divorce. She will lose some of her friends. For a while she will wonder if she deserves to keep her own self respect. Yet the choice is between that and suicide. For a life which is a perpetual lie ... a life which gets more painful with every passing day of the soul's denial ... is no life at all.

Make believe? No. Increasing research evidence indicates that everything which transsexual people have ever reported about their mysterious juxtaposition of psychological gender and physical sex is true. The more science is inclined to look, the more it finds to substantiate the discovery that children like the little "boy" in the picture above really did already have the brain of a little girl.

Nobody can be blamed for assuming this little girl was a boy. If we have to have a basis for distinguishing how we're going to differentiate the type of upbringing we're to give our children then the appearance of their genitals is no more and no less arbitrary than the colour of their skin or the country they were born in. What matters, however, is how we respond when the child is old enough to turn round and say that we got it wrong in their case.

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It helps, of course, to be sophisticated enough to be able to accept such an assertion with the respect it deserves. If society attaches such importance to gender then it's hardly a trivial thing when you know you've been dragooned into the wrong one. Transsexuals need help, not hindrance, if they are to manage a transition which affects every single way in which they relate to the world around them.

More than that, however, a compassionate and sensible society will recognise that once such a change has occurred then there is absolutely no benefit to anyone in making it anything less than a 100% change. Society only has two social genders to choose from. Man and Woman. To cripple a man with a legal status which regards him as a woman, or to say that a woman cannot marry a man because of her long-since-removed birth deformity is to erect a deliberate barrier to the otherwise successful functioning of that individual. It is, in short, like breaking a man's leg because you don't want to accept that he can walk.

And that is all that we in Press for Change seek from British society. The right to walk. To stand on our own two feet after being forced to crawl for almost thirty years. It's not a lot, is it?

This information sheet is compiled from an article by Press for Change, the organisation which campaigns for rights for transsexual people. To find out more about Press For Change visit their website at [pfc.org.uk](http://pfc.org.uk) or write to them at:- Press For Change, BM Network, London WC1N 3XX

*By Christine Burns, April 1997*

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